

FRIENDS OF VALLEY GARDENS, HARROGATE

Minutes of General Meeting held at St Peter's Church on Thursday 10 September 2015 at 7.00pm

Present: Liz Chidlow, Robert Grange, Anne Grange, Mike Hine, Ann Broadbent, Ann Beeby, Sue Wood, Jane Blayney (Chairman), Peter Blayney, Martin Fish, Andrew Jordan, Tom Holleman, Jim Clark, Malcolm Neesam, Simon Collier.

Apologies: Jenny Travena, Jon Collins, Bob and Pat Nash, Patrick Kilburn, Amanda Wilkinson

Minutes of last meeting (13/11/14): These were accepted as a correct record.

Matters arising: None.

Chairman's report: JB commented that the 1940s Open Day had been successful and thanks were due to "the few" who had organised and run the day. This had now become very much a community event and more helpers were definitely needed to keep pace with its increasing popularity. 27,000 visitors had entered Valley Gardens that day and £7,200 raised which had put the completion of the restoration of the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room beyond doubt. The flypast had been popular and assistance had come from the Harrogate Lions and the Army Foundation College. Hales Bar had been extremely generous. Splendid contributions had been made by Harrogate Mumblers and the cake stall team. 609 (WR) Squadron (Leeming), the Yorkshire Regiment and the faithful groups of re-enactors had added to the attractions. Thanks were also due to Mike Middleton (HBC) for his help and guidance. A bid was expected from the new tenants of the Sun Pavilion, CGC Catering Ltd, to provide the catering next year, the date for which, 19 June, clashed with HM Queen's 90th birthday celebrations and thought would be given to this. The team had since carried out a SWOT analysis and action would be taken to improve the effort/profitability ratio.

Thanks were especially due to RG whose expertise had combined with Clerks of Works Trish McLaughlin, Mark Coston and Wayne Trott to complete the restoration of the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room. The FOVG website was achieving 130 hits a day and thanks were due to TH for his custodianship; also to SC and PC for their unstinting support, and to MN for his expert advice as well as a supply of books for sale. MH had kindly donated several artefacts and prints. The official public opening of the Old Magnesia Well Pump Room by MN would take place on 6 October and it was intended to install a commemorative plaque. The opening would be followed by a cream tea in the Magnesia Café for invited guests. It was important that money was spent on projects rather than entertainment.

Other projects were being explored including the restoration of the Japanese Garden, the Green Park entrance gateposts and the improvement of vistas. All require practical help as well as funds. Aby was in touch with the Japanese Garden Society, photos were being gathered and visits made. MF had contacts. A meeting had been held with the Heritage Lottery Fund and contact would be made with their regional office in Leeds.

Volunteer gardeners: LC had submitted a report - copy attached.

Finance: AG reported a bank balance of £11,203, against which there was £3,500 to pay for the Information boards. A heater, and a storage chest and display facilities, informed by practical experience, would be purchased. Some funds were still awaited and it was estimated that there would be a surplus of £8,000.

Future events: Bug Hotel by Western School and the Bio-Diversity group. Bird boxes planned.

Annual General Meeting 17 March 2016

1940s Open Day 19 June 2016

Any other business: PB apologised for the omission of the title "Albatross" from the Newsletter recently emailed due to technical problems.

Following a break the meeting heard from our President MF, who gave a fascinating talk on "A Life in Gardening".

P J Blayney: Secretary
Chairman

J E Blayney: